

dreams and reach their potential. Charter schools help fulfill this mission. During National Charter Schools Week, we celebrate the successes of these institutions.

Charter schools are an important part of our effort to improve the public school system and offer broader educational options to every family. Like other public schools, charter schools are open to all students. Because they are subject to fewer State and district regulations than other public schools, charter schools offer teachers and administrators more freedom in tailoring programs to meet specific student and community needs. In exchange for this freedom, they must meet stricter accountability standards.

Now in their second decade, the demand for charter schools is growing among families from all backgrounds. During this school year, our Nation's charter schools will educate nearly 700,000 students. Many families choose charter schools because of the innovative curriculum and focus on academic achievement, and because these schools can be a promising alternative to a low-performing neighborhood school.

Charter schools are an important part of the No Child Left Behind Act. They provide parents with more choices for their children's education. The greater autonomy of charter schools allows them to employ innovative educational practices. Studies have shown that many charter schools improve academic achievement for their students and that parents of students in charter schools are satisfied with their children's schools.

My fiscal year 2005 budget includes an overall 49 percent increase for elementary and secondary education over 2001 levels, and it proposes \$219 million for charter school grants and \$100 million for charter school facilities. Together, funding for these two charter school programs has increased 68 percent over 2001 levels. By raising expectations, insisting on results, and refusing to accept failure, we are strengthening our public schools and improving education for all children in America.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2 through

May 8, 2004, as National Charter Schools Week. I commend our Nation's charter schools, and I call on parents of charter school students to share their successes to help all Americans understand more about the important work of charter schools.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

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Proclamation 7778—Law Day, U.S.A., 2004

April 30, 2004

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

The theme of this year's Law Day, "To Win Equality by Law: *Brown v. Board* at 50," celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The Declaration of Independence declared the equality of each person before God and the responsibility of Government to secure the rights of all. However, it was not until ratification of the 14th Amendment in 1868 that the equality of all citizens under law was guaranteed by the Constitution. Still, for decades afterwards, millions of African-American citizens were subjected to shameful discrimination, and in many public school systems, students were segregated by race. Finally, in the 1954 *Brown* decision, the Supreme Court ruled that segregating students in our public schools violated our Constitution.

Our Nation is grateful for the brave men and women and boys and girls who challenged segregation and helped make equal justice under law a reality for all Americans.

We remember Thurgood Marshall, the heroic lawyer who represented Linda Brown and fought for her rights and the rights of all African Americans. We remember the nine justices of the Supreme Court of the United States who helped America begin to make equal justice under law a reality for African Americans.

Nearly 50 years after *Brown*, we appreciate the progress America has made, but we also recognize that there is still work to be done to ensure that our country lives up to the founding principle that all of God's children are created equal. As we observe this Law Day and commemorate the anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, I encourage all Americans to celebrate the great distance we have traveled as a Nation and to continue our work to promote equality and opportunity for all.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, in accordance with Public Law 87–20, as amended, do hereby proclaim May 1, 2004, as Law Day, U.S.A. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also call upon Government officials to display the flag of the United States in support of this national observance.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

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Proclamation 7779—Loyalty Day, 2004

April 30, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As Americans, we work to preserve the freedom declared by our Founding Fathers, defended by generations, and granted to every man and woman on Earth by the Almighty. On Loyalty Day, we are reminded that we are citizens with obligations to our country, to each other, and to our great legacy of freedom and democracy.

We learn lessons of loyalty from the selfless dedication and unwavering allegiance of our men and women in uniform. We are grateful for their courage and willingness to sacrifice for our country, and we stand united behind them. Through the “On the Homefront” program, a USA Freedom Corps initiative, many Americans are writing to service members, contributing to the purchase of care packages to be sent overseas, and helping the families of those deployed with basic family needs such as home repairs, financial planning, and child care. By supporting our troops and their families, citizens are making a difference in their communities and showing loyalty to our country through their patriotism.

America's citizens are also demonstrating their loyalty to our Nation through volunteer service. In answering the call to serve something greater than self, Americans reflect the compassion and decency that make our country great. Through the USA Freedom Corps, my Administration is providing information about volunteer opportunities to Americans so they can give back to their communities and help their fellow citizens in need. The hard work and generosity of America's volunteers help build a culture of service and responsible citizenship that strengthens America and sets a positive example for future generations.